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THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

PHILOSOPHY IN FRANCE, 1921.¹

FRENCH philosophy lost, last year, a man whose name is among those most widely known outside France, Emile Boutroux. He was a member of the French Academy and of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, emeritus Professor at the Sorbonne, Director of the Fondation Thiers—to mention here only his French titles—and was ranked as highly on account of his career as a university teacher as for his writings. His family included, it is hardly necessary to recall, the most eminent men, among them the great mathematician and philosopher, Henri Poincaré; the former President of the Republic, today Prime Minister, Raymond Poincaré; and his brother Lucien Poincaré, late esteemed rector of the University of Paris. He left one son, Pierre Boutroux, whose work on *L'Idéal Scientifique des Mathématiciens* I have had occasion to mention in a former article, and who, after having taught mathematics at Princeton University, is today professor of the history of the sciences at the Collège de France.² A son-in-law, M. Villey, whose original work on *La vie des Aveugles* is also well known to readers of this REVIEW, is professor at the University of Caen.

Boutroux was born in 1845, and studied at the Ecole Normale from 1865 to 1868. His thought formed itself under the influence

¹ Translated from the French by Harold R. Smart.

² At the moment of submitting this article for publication I learn with very great sorrow of the death of M. Pierre Boutroux; an event deplorable not only because of its untimeliness (M. Boutroux was scarcely more than forty years old), but also because of the further scholarly contributions which the sciences and philosophy might have expected from so talented a personality.

of Ravaisson and Lachelier, and later under that of Renouvier. To these influences we must also add that of the entire modern philosophical tradition, French, English, and German, of which Boutroux had the most extensive knowledge. He was, first of all, an incomparable teacher. Those who have not heard him lecture would find it difficult to imagine the extreme charm of his speech, or the impression of profound and penetrating intelligence which he diffused about him. His teaching, at Montpellier and at Nancy, then at the Ecole Normale and at the Sorbonne, was exclusively devoted to the history of philosophy. In his classes he had the art of making clear the most difficult theories, even those most foreign to contemporary notions, always expressing the thought in the most striking manner, while each of his lectures, admirably composed, threaded its way as if through a little drama of philosophical ideas. In seminars in which he addressed a limited number of auditors, and directed the work of his advanced students, or had them talk under his guidance, he would often suggest in a few sentences new points of view, always based on a searching knowledge of the texts, which served powerfully to stimulate the thought of his audience.

It is regrettable that there remains of this rich and varied scholarship only a few very brief works. These include an admirable little volume on *Pascal*, for whom he professed an almost religious respect; a collection of articles assembled under the title *Etudes d'histoire de la philosophie* (Socrates, Aristotle, Jacob Boehme, Descartes, Kant, the Scottish School); and an edition of Leibniz's *Monadologie*, preceded by an extensive preface, which remained up to the work of Couturat the best of the French studies on Leibniz's system as a whole. He has himself given an admirable expression of the principles that guided him in his great work as an interpreter of philosophical doctrines. "The work of the mind is a continual oscillation from the whole to the parts and from the parts to the whole. . . . It is 'in explaining the author through his own mouth' (Herder), his general ideas by his particular doctrines and his particular doctrines by his general ideas, that we may hope best to grasp his thought. The historian who is in quest, not of anecdotes, but of a just appreciation of the work

of a great man, will devote himself less to drawing up and manœuvring an imposing array of isolated texts than to penetrating further and further into the thought of the author by reading and re-reading a great number of times all his works. The systems of philosophy are living thoughts; it is by seeking in the book the means of resuscitating these thoughts for himself that one may hope to understand them.”¹

But Boutroux was not only an historian of philosophy. His thesis for the doctorate, *De la contingence des lois de la nature* (1874), later taken up again and developed in a work on *L’Idée de loi naturelle*,² marks a date in the history of contemporary thought. Along with the work of Renouvier, which emphasizes so strongly the notions of discontinuity and free-will, these books represent a tendency of thought (developed especially since 1890, but always operative), which refuses to recognize scientific truth as an absolute standard, and emphasizes the relative, indeed even conventional character of scientific conclusions. It is well known how much Henri Poincaré contributed to the diffusion of this doctrine.

In the period of the seventies the classical determinism of Spinoza and Leibniz, of Kant and Fichte, of Schopenhauer, of J. S. Mill (in spite of some often ill-advised criticisms on the part of the traditional school), seemed to be attaining to the standing of an established philosophical principle. Boutroux is one of those who did most to overcome the influence of this doctrine upon French thought. The philosophy of Renouvier had gained ground very slowly in France up to this time, and it was largely through the influence of Boutroux that its importance came to be recognized.

During the latter part of Boutroux’s life new problems attracted him. Traces of them are to be found in his book, *Science et Religion* (1908). And he brought to these problems the same spirit of relativism, and, in consequence, of conciliation, which desires to live and let live; which admits diversity of characters, even intellectual; and which makes truth consist in a harmony, rather than in a mere agreement, of thoughts. This is not the place to discuss

¹ *Etudes d’histoire de la philosophie*, pp. 8–9.

² Lectures given at the Sorbonne in 1892–3, and published in 1895.

this spirit of organic synthesis, which so markedly characterizes our age, and which indeed is one of the forms of the eternal cult of life. I have simply wished to recall how much the influence of Emile Boutroux contributed to extend this movement in his native land.

The war was a great shock to him and completely changed his feelings toward Germany. His thought had been developed through occupation with the whole of European philosophy, and particularly through the study of German philosophy. He had an excellent command of the German language and had made long sojourns in Germany. In his teaching he always took great pains to develop in his students an exact knowledge and just estimate of German philosophy. He was therefore overwhelmed by an aggression he had believed impossible, and was perhaps even more overcome by the declaration of unity of the most famous German scholars in support of the militarism and spirit of hegemony of their government. He experienced a violent reaction, such as one passes through in the case of a betrayed confidence. This expressed itself until his death in a strong indignation directed towards the whole of modern German thought. On this account some have accused him of inconsistency, but this would be to fail to comprehend his moral attitude. He would willingly have repeated of their philosophers what Paul de Saint Victor said in 1871 of German authors: "We shall walk no more in the woods of the German idyll; the *Vergiss-mein-nicht* are stained with blood. . . . One of her poets attributed to Germany dominion of the air. We took his word for it, and with eyes raised towards the skies sought this angelic Muse among the stars. . . . And behold! From this azure towards which we directed our vision there descends, with open claws, with voracious cries, a band of vultures!"

Boutroux was struck down in the last years of his life with another cruel affliction in the loss of the wife who had surrounded him with every care, and who had guarded to an advanced age his always delicate health. And he was not less painfully affected, on the other hand, by the state of ruin and weakness in which France was plunged, worn out as she was by her resistance to an invasion of four years' duration. Many of his former students had been

killed. Owing to the depreciation of money values, the Fondation Thiers, of which he was the Director, was involved in financial troubles. His anxiety concerning both the immediate and the more remote future of his country was the subject of which I most often heard him speak after peace came. It is not at all doubtful that all these sorrows and anxieties helped to bring about the fatal result of the malady which caused his death.

II.

In spite of these consequences of the war, which continue to make themselves felt every day and often in a very painful fashion in the life of the scholar-class of France, the last year has revealed, especially in the history of philosophy, considerable productive activity.

M. Andler has brought out the second volume of his great work on Nietzsche, of which we made mention last year. This volume concerns the youth of Nietzsche up to the rupture with Bayreuth,—with a Bayreuth reminiscent of Flemish festivities, turning finally to the worst extravagances—the time at which the Wagnerian art, at first imagined as so pure, appeared to sink into the grossness of the crowd which acclaimed it.¹

An intense vitality characterizes the book, vividly recalling the figures that surrounded the child, the youth, and the young professor at Basle. The author, who is both a philosophical scholar and a philologist, combines a learned study on the *Geburt der Tragödie* with a psychological biography possessing all the emotional qualities of a novel. This account of the young Nietzsche's life and personality already explains the formation of some of his essential philosophical theses. Written in another tone, but with a similar union of qualities, the *Descartes savant*² of our lamented colleague Milhaud is also a work of the first order. On one hand it is a penetrating study of the psychology of Descartes's thought and processes of discovery, recounting the influences which his contemporaries, whether friends or adversaries, had upon him. It contains an acute and carefully balanced discussion of the always

¹ *La Jeunesse de Nietzsche*, 1 vol., 8vo, pp. 469, Bossard.

² 1 vol., 8vo, pp. 249, Alcan. Cf. on Milhaud, *PHIL. REV.*, XXVIII, pp. 463-465.

debatable question of his good faith in controversies and of his sincerity in religious matters. On the other hand it is a learned, painstaking and instructive research on technical questions with which M. Milhaud was particularly well qualified to deal because of his competence both as a mathematician and as a historian of philosophy. One may place beside this book one less profound, but nevertheless indicative of an unusually extensive and rich biographical scholarship, the first volume of the *Ecrivains français en Hollande*,¹ by M. Gustave Cohen, the major part of which concerns the life of Descartes in the Low Countries. The book contains, along with several fine portraits of Descartes, new information upon his relations with H  l  ne Jans, upon the birth and death of his daughter Francine, and upon his struggles with the opponents of his philosophy; and finally, it tells of his departure for Sweden and his death.

M. Br  hier has published in the little "Collection Payot" a *Histoire de la philosophie allemande*, which is a masterpiece of brevity and compactness.² It is not, properly speaking, a manual, but rather a bird's-eye view, grouping biographical information concerning the philosophers themselves around a few general and significant ideas, the whole presented with great clarity and relief. M. Br  hier is very familiar with German romanticism, to which he had previously devoted special attention, and takes for the center of his exposition the great period from 1790 to 1830, strongly emphasizing the relationship of this broad and inclusive idealistic movement to the Neo-Platonic tradition.

Le d  sir de Dieu dans la philosophie de Plotin, by the Abbe Arnou, is a technical and learned study of the texts, in which the various terms are discussed with great care and learning. The second volume of this work contains the results of a special research into the significance of the words $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ and $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$.³ *La th  orie de la certitude chez Newman*,⁴ a posthumous work of the Abb   Bonnegent, contains an exposition and a rather severe though

¹ 1 vol., 8vo, Champion, 1921. Pp. 357-687 concern the biography of Descartes.

² 1 vol., 16mo, pp. 160, Payot.

³ 2 vols., 8vo, pp. xix, 323 and vii, 87, Alcan.

⁴ 1 vol., 8vo, pp. xi, 208, Alcan.

quite orthodox criticism of the doctrines of the illustrious cardinal. Those little acquainted with the Catholic teaching often suppose that it is willing to allow the depreciation of reason in order to exalt faith, but the Roman church explicitly condemns such a procedure. It assumes that one can and ought first to demonstrate rationally the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, which then may serve as a logical basis for the teachings of revelation as brought forward by the Church traditions. The method of apologetics which adopts a kind of skepticism in order to make place for faith, as it is found in Pascal, Lamennais, or Bautin—and, it seems, in Newman himself, in spite of his firm decision not to fall into any heresies—has been expressly condemned by the Church under the name of *fidéisme*. I do not know what the dominant attitude is in this regard in the United States, but French ecclesiastical authorities, on the whole, remain very much attached to intellectualism. As an example of this we may cite the name of Ollé-Laprune, one of the French Catholic philosophers most in the public eye about 1880. In his work on *La Certitude Morale* he had closely followed the principles of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, and one sees in the preface of the second edition how strongly he defends himself against the reproach of weakening the rights of the understanding. M. Le Roy, and even M. Blondel, have had to suffer criticisms of the same nature, and it is curious to see how M. Bergson's philosophy, at first received with favor in religious circles, presently awakened distrust as according too great a place to "intuitions" bordering, it seems, on "real assent" and on the "illative sense."

We may briefly mention also several other books on the history of philosophy. M. Guénon has just published a book on *Indian Philosophy*.¹ And we have also the first volume of a work by Father Sortais on the *Histoire de la philosophie moderne depuis Bacon jusqu'à Leibniz*,² which contains the most complete study in French on the Chancellor of England, the biography in particular being unusually complete. There should be included here, too, several studies on contemporary thinkers, such as *Les maîtres de la pensée française*, by M. Paul Gaultier (a title somewhat too am-

¹ 1 vol., 8vo, pp. 347, Marcel Rivière.

² 1 vol., 8vo, pp. x, 592, Lathielleux.

bitious for the work, which includes only four articles on Hervieu, Bergson, Boutroux, and Barrès). And Madame Claparede's little book about her father, the philosopher Spir, is a work which is not only an act of filial piety, but which calls attention to a writer too often neglected, and whose work anticipated the speculations at present of so much interest, concerning the application of the idea of identity to the intellectual and moral spheres.¹ Of a similar nature is the *Jean Jacques Gourd*² of M. Louis Trial, who was a friend both of Gourd and of Renouvier. It is a biography which should give rise to an increase of sympathy for J. J. Gourd among those who know his works, and which will make them better understood. Finally, M. Edouard Claparède has published, in one volume, his attractive study on *Théodore Flournoy*,³ illustrated with a fine portrait of Flournoy and a photograph showing him with William James, in 1905, in the author's garden.

III.

The philosophy of the sciences, always a favorite branch of philosophy with the French, has this year produced a work of first rank and importance: *De l'explication dans les sciences*, by Emile Meyerson.⁴ The central idea of the work, already sketched by the author fourteen years ago in his *Identité et Réalité*, is that to explain is always to show that what one demands explanation for is at bottom identical with some other thing somehow already known or given; in a word, that to explain means always to assimilate. But since assimilation, in the end, would leave nothing existent, inasmuch as only changes and differences are to be perceived, it follows that science as a whole tends to effect the dissolution of what it explains, and thus maintains itself only by virtue of an extraordinary antinomy. On the one hand science is realistic, conceiving its objects as things, and except in size, quite like the objects of common sense. On the other hand it aims at leav-

¹ *Un Précurseur: African Spir.*, 1 vol., 8vo, pp. 62, Payot.

² 1 vol., pp. 416, Fischbacher.

³ 1 vol., 8vo, pp. 125. (Extract from the "Archives de Psychologie," Geneva, Kundig.)

⁴ 2 vols., 8vo, pp. xiv, 338 and 470, Payot. Although M. Meyerson is Polish by birth he has lived at Paris for a long time, and writes French better than many of our fellow countrymen.

ing nothing unexplained; a result which would reduce everything to pure movements of an unsubstantial, undifferentiated extension. Thus the Cartesian physics, however superannuated it may be as to detail, remains in its general conception of things the current schema of contemporary scientific explanation. To assure oneself of this it suffices to talk a little with modern chemists or biologists. It is well known, moreover, how much even the most imprudent audacities of Cartesianism have aided the later progress of the sciences.

But is one forced by this antinomy to conclude that the labors of science are contrary to reason? Hegel thought so; M. Meyerson adopts the opposite view. He maintains that we are not compelled by this 'epistemological paradox' to beat a fearful retreat and to fall back upon those views of the world constructed after the Hegelian or Neo-Hegelian model. Our position is not weakened by the diversities which mind is struggling to overcome, and neither are we in danger of being led on to a pitfall of blank identity, though we seem to be advancing in that direction. In short, science is pursuing the right course even though its procedure implies something irrational in its subject matter. For the material of our knowledge is rich in rebellious, opaque elements, on which our endeavors may exercise themselves in a work at once inspiring to the mind, and fruitful from the pragmatic point of view. Thus we come to discover hidden identities, such as those of weight and gravitation, light and electro-magnetic phenomena, mass and energy; to say nothing of the imminent reduction of the number of the chemical elements which have long resisted all attempts at assimilation.

Such is the theme developed, with the aid of a great fund of historical and scientific knowledge, in *L'explication dans les sciences*. And this thesis is closely related to other contemporary French views, especially, if I may be permitted to say so, to those which I myself proposed in 1899 in *La Dissolution opposée à l'Evolution*. Indeed M. Meyerson has been good enough to call attention to this fact in his very interesting way, thus positively confirming the second of the three formulas that have always seemed to me characteristic of the progress of knowledge:¹ "As-

¹ He also in a certain measure supports my third formula.

similation of minds to other minds, and of things to other things; finally, assimilation of things with minds." This agreement derives greater significance from the fact that there cannot be found, I believe, at the present time, a man better informed on all these questions than M. Meyerson. An administrative technician by profession, occupying himself with the philosophy of the sciences for pleasure and distraction, he maintains towards philosophical notions that freshness of mind not always preserved intact by professional philosophers. Is it not interesting to note that neither Comte, Renouvier nor Cournot were teachers of philosophy?

And this is also true of M. Paulhan, whose recent work, *Le Mensonge du Monde*,¹ although it is rather a work of conceptual analysis than a philosophy of the sciences, it is natural to mention along with M. Meyerson's book. It is not necessary to reintroduce M. Paulhan. During the last thirty years he has produced many valuable works, known to all who follow the movement of contemporary psychology. It will suffice to mention *L'Activité mentale et les éléments de l'esprit*, and especially *La logique de la contradiction*, with which *Le Mensonge du Monde* is closely connected. The central idea of this latter book is, at bottom, the same as M. Meyerson's 'epistemological paradox,' considered from a slightly different point of view. In particular, it is here presented in a more philosophical form; that is to say, more systematically and more abstractly. The world, for M. Paulhan, exists only thanks to a sort of internal illogicality or "compromise between two voids"—that of pure diversity and that of perfect unity. For him, also, 'irrationality' or the 'irrationalities'—constitutes the substance of things. "Only by accepting the illogicality and contradiction immanent in various events and in the multiple adaptations demanded by them may one follow the profound logic of our common life and evolution."² The task of thought, then, is to minimize this illogicality.

The third chapter of M. Paulhan's book, so characteristically entitled "L'évanescence," is devoted to pursuing, with an ingeniousness of mind often reminiscent of Tarde, the phantasmagoric play of *the same* and *the other*, of systematization and di-

¹ 1 vol., 8vo, pp. 362, Alcan.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 360.

versity, of evolution and dissolution. The term *evanescence* signifies the disappearance of the agent upon the accomplishment of its work, just as tribunals and policemen would disappear if, through their long existence, they should succeed in giving to society such a bent of discipline that its members would no longer commit crimes or misdemeanors. As for morality and science, we have here, too, this same 'progress towards identity' made so clear by M. Meyerson in his analysis of the nature of scientific explanation. And more than twenty years ago I also attempted to bring out, as against Mr. Spencer, the philosophical importance and generality of this principle. Indeed it is not seldom that theses which in their beginnings encounter mainly only criticism, slowly find a place in the reflections, conscious or unconscious, of contemporaries, and at last become fully developed and generally accepted. However, I do not subscribe without reserve to all that M. Paulhan has to say, though his thought is always very suggestive and stimulating. I would beg to make a more radical distinction between organization or unity in difference, on the one hand, and between identity or unity in similarity, on the other. M. Paulhan appears to me to tend, like certain partisans of the 'concrete universal,' to subordinate identity to systematization. We have here two procedures often in conflict, and the former does not seem, of itself, to tend towards 'evanescence.' One may easily imagine a universe, more and more organized, like a Leviathan, which would continue to maintain its integral reality precisely because of this systematization. Only through the 'sameness' derived from resemblance, and not through that which consists in participating in a single whole, does the evanescence of the world, and consequently the internal contradiction of things, become manifest. Without doubt there may exist organisms that will disappear, like a Constitutional Assembly, once their work is accomplished, but this is not the most ordinary mode of evolution. On the contrary, the natural organism appears, and appears to itself, as constituting its own end. And do not even the artificial social organisms whose clear-cut function it is to serve as a means often tend to perpetuate themselves in spite of the public interest?

But it would take too much space to discuss here these and related themes, whose secondary divergencies evidently have less in-

terest for the public than for philosophers who have specially devoted their attention to them. Let us return now to what is more properly history or theory of the sciences. M. George Sorel's book, *L'Utilité du Pragmatisme*,¹ surveys in a series of brilliant but disconnected studies, held together by a spirit of general opposition to what he calls 'scientific prejudice,' various questions for the most part relating to epistemology (in the French sense of the word, *i.e.*, in its etymological meaning). In republishing some articles under the general title, *En marge de Curie, de Carnot et d'Einstein*,² M. Rougier—who, by the way, is an indefatigable writer—comments upon three great ideas, which already hold, or are certainly destined to hold, an important place in philosophic thought. The first of these is the principle of the degradation of energy (which it would be preferable to call, in my opinion, the principle of the *equalization* of energy), which had its origin in Carnot's famous formula. Secondly, we have Curie's 'principle of symmetry,' according to which effects are always at least as symmetrical as the corresponding causes—a fruitful principle, related, moreover, to the preceding, not only because of its character of irreversibility, but also because of the sense of '*vection*' which it defines. Here again we have to do, in the large sense of the word, with dissolution, or better, with involution. Finally, the third principle is connected with a name that needs no comment; about the two stages of relativity, as defined by M. Einstein, there flourishes at the present moment in France, and indeed in English- and German-speaking countries also, a complete literature devoted to scientific expositions and to popularizations of the theory. But to this relativity principle we may have occasion to refer later.

To the same order of studies there belongs also a somewhat unusual work, written in French and published in France, by a native of Serbia, M. Michel Petrovitch, professor at the University of Belgrade. It is entitled *Mécanismes communs aux phénomènes disparates*,³ and though it has to do primarily with

¹ 1 vol., 12mo, pp. 471, Rivière.

² 1 vol., 12mo, pp. 269, Chiron.

³ 1 vol., 12mo, pp. 280, Alcan.

scientific problems, it is yet philosophical by virtue of its general point of view. The writer tries to formulate a generalization of mechanical principles, extending to the *ensemble* of physical or social facts the method of analogy that serves to explain, for example, the effects of electric currents by comparing them, point for point, with currents of water. In other words, M. Petrovitch has attempted to construct the general theory and, so to speak, the formal logic, of analogies of this nature. His process of reasoning is a happy combination of the syllogistic mode of reasoning so greatly over-developed in the middle ages, and the demonstrative, mechanical method employed by Descartes and his followers which succeeded in almost entirely eliminating the former method, in spite of that method's inherent power to enlighten the mind and suggest new discoveries. And, while speaking of foreign philosophers, I may mention also a very scholarly study by a Swiss writer who, however, has passed the greater part of his life at Paris, Ch. Dutoit. His book, too, takes as its thesis an universal analogy—that of the forms of energy.¹ A preface by M. Philippe Bridel introduces the author and recommends the book.²

IV.

The works on ethical subjects recall us to the bitter realities of the present hour. So long as we keep our attention wholly upon philosophy proper or upon science we may forget the invasion for the time being, with the ruins it has left on the soil of France and the financial difficulties of Europe. We may forget also the general overturning of social standards and moral habits, the difficulty of procuring the necessities of life, and the general anxiety for the morrow which disturbs the lives of all those whose incomes or salaries have been unbalanced by the cataclysm. But for philosophers to stupefy themselves with the opium of intellectual speculation and to close their eyes to the situation would in the end show a lack of courage on their part.

¹ *L'Energie universelle*, 1 vol., 12mo, pp. ix, 105, Alcan.

² Incidentally I may mention a book which does not directly concern philosophy, but in an indirect fashion touches upon the logic of the moral sciences: *L'Histoire traditionnelle et la synthèse historique*, by H. Berr, 1 vol., 12mo, pp. x, 146, Alcan. It is an interesting collection of articles, the chief of which concerns Lacombe, a French scholar who died in 1919, and who occupied himself a great deal with the methodology of history.

French philosophy, on the contrary, looks the situation in the face, as is well illustrated by M. Belot's book, *La conscience française et la guerre*.¹ It is a forceful, far-sighted piece of work, in which the author shows that he is not afraid to denounce evil even in his fellow countrymen, and to measure its extent. Still greater in extent than the material ruins of the war is, to his mind, the breakdown of morality. Such, for example, are the habits of violence and ruse transported from the battlefield to daily life; the ranking of force or skill above law; the placing of immediate personal interests above those of the public good. Where are we to look for salvation from this reign of disorder? From a more lively consciousness of the social realities, and a clearer comprehension of social unity; whence, in turn, will be born a superior moral conscience. "We can expect from Society neither more justice nor more advantages unless we invigorate and strengthen the moral conscience. And finally it must be endowed with complete or at least substantial support resting upon the end of collective life. What is essential is not only further progress beyond the point to which the conscience has led us in the past, but rather, in the literal sense of the word, a 'conversion,' which will have the effect of directing the activity of conscience outward instead of inward." Individualism itself was a social product, and perhaps, at a certain moment, a product required by social conditions. But it must now surrender its place, or at least subordinate itself to public interests which are more foundational than it, and of greater value.

In the second edition, revised and augmented of his *Etudes de morale positive*, which M. Belot has just published,² one of the new chapters is entitled "La valeur morale de la science," thus suggesting one of the essential articles of the author's creed, and perhaps of French philosophy taken as a whole. M. Maurice Blondel (who is, be it noted, from the point of view of religious beliefs at the antipodes to M. Belot) wrote, this last year, a schol-

¹ 1 vol., 12mo, pp. xi, 195, Alcan.

² 2 vols., 8vo, pp. xx, 290 and 288, Alcan. This edition contains, among other things, a new preface and a new chapter on "Rules opposed to the Ethical Motif."

arly little book called *Le procès de l'intelligence*.¹ In it he clearly separates his doctrine from that of the pragmatists. He might well take as a motto for the book the words of Saint Augustine as cited on the final page—*Intellectum valde ama*.

M. Parodi has just published a second, very much enlarged edition of his *Le problème morale et la pensée contemporaine*,² its most distinctive feature being, also, the expression of faith in reason. In its earlier form this was one of the most popular of student's books. Indeed, it often played for them the rôle of a manual of contemporary 'theoretical ethics.' It had its origin in a collection of more practical studies, under the general title of *L'épreuve des faits*, touching upon a series of moral questions raised by the war and the coming of peace. The last study, "*le rationalisme morale*," is particularly characteristic. It is a vigorous argument against the so-called intuitive morality, or the 'reasons of the heart,' and opposes the notion that we may dispense with principles based on reflection and general rules because forsooth we are able to seize by instinct upon the unique in every situation and adapt ourselves to it in the best possible fashion. "That," says M. Parodi, "is to support equivocation, together with all the sophisms of sentiment, egoism, *amour-propre*, and passion. . . . Abandon the rational point of view and acts change name according to the party or the nationality of those who perform them. Respect for established rules, treaties, contracts, the will of populations, the rights of peoples to dispose of themselves—these are duties for the one but not for the other. Oppression, conquest, annexation, transform themselves when the rôles of vanquisher and vanquished are inverted. For (as is commonly said), 'it is no longer the same thing.' Let us of the country of Descartes, of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and of the battle of the Marne, see to it that what we call justice remain for us the same in the hours of victory as in the days of peril; may we never allow morality to divorce itself, among us, from clear and impartial reason."³ It was not unnecessary to say this plainly,

¹ A brochure in 8vo, of 56 pages, published by *La Nouvelle Journée*. The title of M. Blondel's great work, *L'Action*, has caused many misunderstandings about his doctrine.

² 1 vol., 8vo, pp. vi, 301, Alcan.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 300.

even 'in the country of Descartes,' for we have in France a few enemies of reason—more noisy than numerous, it is true—who willingly make fun of the 'Rights of Man' while they speak with respect of the 'Rights of Victory.' But there is no doubt that the great majority of philosophers and educators in France agree on this point with M. Belot and M. Parodi. We have another example of this in M. Bouglé's remarkable little volume, *L'éducateur laïque*,¹ completely permeated as it is with this same rationalistic and social spirit. It is a particularly interesting book for the foreign reader, because it puts before his eyes, in the most vivid fashion, the moral problems actually confronting the State schools of France, together with the solution offered by one of the broadest and most independent minds amongst those not belonging to any religious organization.² And indeed one finds the same spirit again, in spite of difference in tone, in M. Brunschvicg's book, *Nature et liberté*;³ a work somewhat disconnected from the point of view of subject-matter but nevertheless inspired by one dominating idea, "conformable," he says, "to the order of which Pascal speaks, and which consists in making digressions on each point only to direct them all, in the end, towards the same goal." This goal, for M. Brunschvicg, is the notion of a philosophy rational in spirit, without being rationalistic in the narrow sense of the word; a philosophy which would reconcile the systems of Descartes and Pascal, logic and brute fact, with their accompanying sentiments and tendencies. The conclusion of the book, however, smacks more of Descartes than of Pascal. It asserts "the religious value of the effort by which man abstracts from that part of his nature which is not intelligence, and turns himself towards the truth with his whole soul (according to the admirable words

¹ 1 vol., 12mo, pp. 88, Rieder.

² *La pédagogie française*, by M. Lapie, former rector and director of Primary Schools (1 vol., 12mo, pp. 216, Alcan) also may be consulted by those interested in this order of question, though it is concerned less with moral tendencies than with the methods of teaching.

³ 1 vol., 12mo, pp. xii, 161, Flammarion. One should read, in connection with this book, the July, 1921, number of the *Bulletin de la Société de philosophie* (A. Colin, publisher), in which M. Brunschvicg has expressed his ideas on the nature of reason, together with a discussion by M. Le Roy, Meyerson, Parodi, and several other members of the society.

of Plato, whose faculty psychology, nevertheless, in the hands of eclectics or pragmatists, has led to a perversion of this meaning). To consider as a mere word or a dream *the pure idea*—which must be pure if perchance it is to be true—to doubt that it may be the source of noble sentiments and generous acts, is to commit a mortal sin against the mind of man.”

V.

In the other divisions of philosophy there has been less activity this year. By far the most important among the publications devoted to them, it appears to me, is *Le langage*,¹ by M. Vendryes. It is a book packed full of material, and with unusually extensive references. In less than five hundred pages it covers the entire field of general linguistic science. The origin of language, about which the author makes considerable reservations, phonetic material, verbal images, the grammatical categories, vocabularies and sematology; the influence of affective elements on language, the constitution and variation of languages, their relationships to one another; the strife of dialects, common tongues, special languages (such as those of trades or small social groups), the psychological relations between the spoken and the written word, the development of languages—such are the numerous interesting questions for philosophy, in this, the most synthetic and general work concerned with these problems yet published. The high authority enjoyed by M. Vendryès, who is professor of comparative grammar at the University of Paris, permits those who are not philologists to make use of the facts which he cites and the assertions which he makes in the name of contemporary linguistic science with the maximum of confidence that may be accorded to a scholar's work in case one does not share the same specialty.

M. Georges Poyer, who is one of those who continue the tradition of *agrégés* in philosophy later to become doctors of medicine, presented for his doctor's thesis a work of a general nature on *Les problèmes généraux de l'hérédité psychologique*.² The au-

¹ 1 vol., 8vo, pp. xxviii, 439, la Renaissance du Livre. The *Journal de Psychologie* devoted a double number (Oct. and Nov., 1921) to a series of articles on the psychology of language, considered in its various aspects.

² 1 vol., 8vo, pp. 303 (with an extensive bibliography), Alcan.

thor's extensive acquaintance with other recent works on this question is highly to be commended. His book contains many interesting suggestions and a useful discussion of the various methods of confronting this problem at the present time. And that phase of the matter concerned with eugenics should furnish an important practical application of those methods. M. Mentré, in his *Espèces et variétés d'intelligence*,¹ presents an historical summary of the attempts at a classification of the various types of minds, and himself proposes a synthetic table of them. In another somewhat unusual book, *Les générations sociales*,² he expounds the theory according to which tastes, ideas and customs renew themselves about every thirty years. He recalls the ancient origins of this doctrine, analyzes modern forms given to it by Dromel, Ferrari, and Ottokar Lorenz, and finally, adopting it himself, attempts an application (more ingenious than convincing) to the French generations from 1515 to 1915. Finally, M. Larguier des Bancels has published an *Introduction à la Psychologie*,³ in which he studies the object and methods of psychology, the various historical hypotheses on the relation of the mind to the body (singularly enough, since the book is dedicated to him, the ideas of Binet on this point occupy a very small space), the relation between nervous and mental activity, and between reflex and cerebral activity. Two chapters on instinct and emotion terminate the volume. Many facts are to be found in the book, and an extensive acquaintance with the work of contemporary psychologists. Every scholar knows, moreover, the author's contributions rendered since its inception to *L'Année Psychologique*.

M. V. Basch has published in the *Revue Philosophique* an article entitled "Le maître problème de l'esthétique," dealing with the psychology of art; and within the borders of sociology another student of esthetics, M. Lalo, has given us a new work in no way inferior to the preceding. Though still a young man, M. Lalo nevertheless appears to hold a place in the front rank among French authors devoted to this field of study. His book, *L'Art*

¹ 1 vol., 8vo, pp. 296, Bossard.

² 1 vol., 8vo, pp. 472, Bossard.

³ 1 vol., 8vo, pp. 286, Payot. M. Larguier des Bancels is professor at the University of Lausanne.

et la vie sociale,¹ treats of the relations between art and non-esthetic facts which are on the same plane—and not of those subordinate in the sense that they belong to more elementary sciences, *e.g.*, the physical theory of colors or that of the rôle of memory in art. He has given special attention, accordingly, to the esthetic sense in its relation to family life, to trades, social classes, the government, and religion. It is hardly necessary to add that in spite of its careful documentation we are concerned here with a general review of questions which demand at once deeper research on certain points, and a continuation including other phases of the subject—all of which, indeed, is promised by the author himself. For he judges correctly that esthetics should be essentially a normative science, and that, as a result, besides the non-esthetic influences, certain very central problems remain to be studied concerning the proper nature of art itself. Perhaps this, again, is another aspect of that French rationalism of which we have had many examples in the studies on ethics.

VI.

The year 1921 ended in a great gathering, at the Sorbonne, of representatives of the various philosophical societies, American, English, Belgian, and Italian, who had been invited by the *Société française de la philosophie* to hold a common session during the Christmas holidays.

M. Xavier Léon, Editor of the *Revue de Métaphysique*, President of the Society, and organizer of this conference, first welcomed the foreign delegates. Then M. Léon Brunschvicg, professor at the Sorbonne, recalled the names of members of the Society deceased during these last few years—Poincaré, Rauh, Lachelier, Delbos, Darlu, Boutroux—and of those who were indirectly victims of the war—Couturat, Milhaud, and Durkheim.² He mentioned also the names of several young men killed in the war and who therefore did not have time to acquire a reputation as philosophical scholars but who showed every indication of a promising future.

¹ 1 vol., 12mo, pp. 373, Doin (Encyclopédie Scientifique).

² Ribot, of course, was a member of the Society, but he did not care for argumentation and almost never attended the meetings.

This recalling of the past was only a first, retrospective, and brief homage to those who are no more. The fittest way to honor them is to continue the work which they began, and in the performance of this duty the philosophers met in the old University of Paris were not lacking. Indeed, one is almost tempted to say that they acquitted themselves with too much zeal, for the number of communications and discussions was so considerable that several meetings had to be held at the same time. I shall not now and here undertake to give a *résumé* of five days so replete with content. I shall, rather, simply try to give a general idea of the questions treated and of the most interesting meetings.¹

In the field of the history of philosophy mention was made of several classical systems. Thus M. Dupréel of the University of Brussels, Dr. Ross of Oxford, and Messrs. Robin and Alfred Croiset² took part in a discussion concerning some phases of the doctrines of Socrates and Plato. Professor Hoernlé of Durham read a paper on Berkeley, which was discussed by MM. Beaulavon, Gilson and Lévy-Bruhl; M. Raymond Lenoir presented some considerations on Fontenelle; MM. Gilson and Pécaut read papers on Auguste Comte; and Dr. Blondel of Strassbourg had something to say about Taine. In psychology Dr. Pierre Janet awakened a lively interest by a communication on the various forms of the will and belief, observed in a case of alternating psychasthenic delirium. He showed that will and belief should be evaluated, not according to their strength but according to the hierarchical degree attained by them in the development of human conduct. MM. Bergson, Piéron, and Dr. Georges Dumas discussed this paper. MM. E. Rignano and Revault d'Allones presented some remarks on the functioning of the intelligence, and M. Louis Weber on the opposition of the technical and the verbal functions in intellectual operations.

Purely scientific questions played an important part in the conference. M. Paul Lévy, professor at the Ecole Polytechnique,

¹ I shall not recall the titles, offices, or works of the philosophers of whom I have already had occasion to speak in preceding articles on philosophy in France. Many of them, moreover, are so well known in America that it would be useless to add anything to their names.

² Former dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, and one of our leading hellenists.

presented a new conception of the principles of the calculus of probabilities, and Mr. Greenwood formulated some considerations of the same nature on the axioms of Geometry. But in this order of questions the meeting which attracted the greatest attention on the part of the public, and caused the most 'excitement,' was that presided over by M. Painlevé, and devoted to the theory of relativity. Miss Wrinch of Cambridge and M. Langevin, professor at the Collège de France, friend of Einstein and almost the official representative of his doctrines in France, explained the new views on the nature of time, space, and gravitation. M. Painlevé attacked them with vigor. The contrast between his ardent, brilliant eloquence and the smiling and tranquil simplicity of M. Langevin was for the auditors a fascinating spectacle. But there were no conclusions reached on that occasion; the meeting was terminated due to lack of time to continue it, the adversaries meanwhile resting their case and planning a rendezvous at the lectures which Einstein himself was soon to conduct in Paris. Among the listeners who came out of curiosity many, it appears, were completely charmed and conquered by this presentation of the new doctrines.

Almost on the same level, from the point of view of interest awakened, must be put the large meeting on ethics and sociology. The speakers were Professors Vermeil of Strassbourg, Andler, Bouglé, and Lichtenberger of the Sorbonne, Elie Halévy of the School of Political Sciences, and François Poncet of the Ecole Polytechnique. The discussion, at first engaged with the principles of political organization, and of their realization among different peoples, soon converged upon a comparison between the new German democracy and the French democracy. It then, by a new ricochet, became engaged with the question of the intellectual relations between German and French scholars. The general feeling was that, without forgetting the too recent and too sad past—without failing to recognize, either, the presence in Germany of a powerful military, anti-democratic party, motivated solely by revenge and the idea of a hegemony, which does not hesitate at any mode of action—the reestablishment of scientific relations between the two nations remained highly desirable and that the attempt must be made to realize it as soon as possible.

But authoritative voices intervened to point out that we were drifting a little too far away from the normal program of a philosophical meeting. We accordingly returned to more serene questions. M. Chardon, Counsellor of State, presented a paper on the organization of a democracy and the administrative reform of public service. On the notion of a State and contemporary experiences we heard other very much appreciated discussions by Professor Bonnucci of Naples, and Professor Sorley of Cambridge. On these themes M. Vidari, rector of Turin University, and M. Elie Halévy, added some interesting remarks of their own.

In another meeting of the same section M. Parodi talked convincingly on rationalism in ethics, the principle of which we explained above.¹ The question of the nature and transformation of values gave vent to very interesting exchanges of opinion between M. Bouglé, Professor Everett of Brown University, and Miss Oakeley of the University of London. Finally, Professor Perry of Harvard, who passed the winter in France to deliver the lectures organized by Mr. James Hyde, outlined some rather novel but very well-received views on the forms of social unity, the relations between society and the organism, and the question of ascertaining in what measure we might admit the existence of collective representations and social minds. Such questions could not fail to raise an echo in a *milieu* in which such scholars as Espinas, Tarde, and Durkheim were teaching only a short time ago. MM. Raymond Lenoir, Fauconnet and Pécaut were the principal participants in the discussion led by Mr. Perry.

So much by way of illustrating the great variety of opinion and the great interest awakened by these discussions. But the question which occupied the largest place in this Christmas conference was the very old and yet always new problem of the relation between scientific and ultimate truth. And during the last twenty years interest in this problem has been increased by the opposition between pragmatism and intellectualism. The sections on metaphysics, logic, and the philosophy of the sciences, even that on ethics, were each in turn led to discuss it. In the first-named section the discussion was started by the memoirs presented by Mr.

¹ Cf. above, Section IV.

H. Wildon Carr of London on "The Nature of Scientific Knowledge," and by Mr. F. C. S. Schiller of Oxford on "Reality, Fact and Value." This group was presided over by M. Bergson, and with him were M. Le Roy, his successor at the Collège de France, one of the best champions of French instrumentalism, and M. Parodi, who, on the contrary, is its most decided adversary.¹ From the very first day the Italian representatives, MM. Enriques of Bologna, and Aliotta and Bonnucci of Naples, took an active part in these discussions. On the second day the problem again arose in connection with the papers by MM. Le Roy and Aliotta on "Verification in Metaphysics," and "The Degrees of Truth," respectively. New interlocutors entered the fray—M. Cresson, author of *L'Invérifiable*, and M. Emmanuel Leroux, a young teacher from the University of Rennes, who has just published a book on English and American Pragmatism. The same question appeared once more, under a scarcely different form, when attention was turned to ethical problems. M. Parodi, having treated, as I pointed out above, of ethical rationalism, provoked a controversy in which the principal participants were his two colleagues G. Belot and P. F. Pécaut. The result of this discussion was a decision in favor of a revision of the old 'rational principles' in the domain of action. The observations of Mr. J. A. Smith of Oxford on "The Economic Theory of the Concept," and those of Mr. De Laguna of Bryn Mawr on "A Nominalistic Interpretation of Truth," paved the way for still another consideration of the same general problem. A final discussion of the issues involved in the nature of the relation of science to philosophy took place in a meeting devoted, at least nominally, to the history of philosophy; this time in connection with the paper by Mr. Wendell T. Bush of Columbia University on "The Relations of Science and Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century," and that by M. Enriques on "The Kantian Theory of *Apriori* Judgments." Thereupon MM. Brunschvicg and Langevin made some very interesting remarks on the ideals of science and the modern forms of rationalism. Of course, I myself participated in these various discussions, the subject of which so closely touched upon my own studies. But I do not

¹ Cf. PHIL. REV., XXIX, pp. 430-435.

think I am permitting myself to be misled by a specialist's illusions in remarking that if other questions did provoke more brilliant or more exciting debate, none of them so completely traversed the whole conference from end to end, or showed the existence of a more general interest. Even Einstein's ideas, already mentioned, certainly interested philosophers less on account of the change (a small one, moreover), that might be effected in our physical conceptions, than on account of possible changes in the modes of scientific interpretation, and in the nature of the 'invariants' which might be expected to endure.

Perhaps we may note also that since the date (say about 1905) when they first began to attract attention in France these several doctrines of rationalism and instrumentalism, intellectualism and pragmatism, have steadily manifested a tendency to merge themselves in a general point of view uniting the elements of truth contained in each of them. The lamented philosophers Boutroux and J. J. Gourd aptly remarked at the Congress of Philosophy in 1900, in speaking of other problems, that it is not without result that philosophers meet and compare ideas. They no longer have as an ideal a kind of individual and artistic elegance. They have learned—partly, perhaps, thanks to their closer relations with scientists—the great lesson of what Auguste Comte called intellectual convergence, and the possibility of a *rapprochement* of minds, due, not to complaisant concessions, or diplomatic eclecticism, but to a reciprocal comprehension only the more fully enriched by the factors which make up the real vitality of each doctrine, and—in consequence—to an internal elaboration, more human, more profound, of each of them. The social spirit, the diffusion of which Mr. R. B. Perry very aptly remarked upon in the memoir already mentioned, today penetrates all branches of learning. As Durkheim used to point out, individualism itself generally accepts the support of the collective will as countenancing freedom and initiative in the acts of the moral person. The old adage, *Veritas filia temporis, non auctoritatis*, now is interpreted in a new sense. We no longer say, with Descartes, that the more one isolates himself the more opportunity one has of attaining the truth. Or rather, giving this idea its legitimate scope, we recognize the funda-

mental role of initiative, of action, of individual creation, on the one hand; and at the same time we grant the importance, both of the collective judgment as its necessary verification, and of the 'purely intellectual' thought, which is, so to speak, its symbol and limit. For, in the end, there is no better criterion of truth than intellectual self-consistency and the accord of one mind with another. Or, expressed in other words, truth is best manifested in that progressive transformation of diversity into likeness which tends to develop in each and every individual center of consciousness the same realization of Spirit.

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